

## OPINION

## Black Youth! Are You Ready?

Join us in the fight for justice

BY AHJAMU UMI

Some of you know may know about our work in the Black Working Group and some of you may not be familiar with us.

For those who haven't heard of us, we are a group of African/Black people who fight to defend our people's homes from predator banks. We have been in the news here quite a bit over the last three or four months due to our direct actions.



We are also very committed to increasing peace in our communities and eliminating police terrorism against our people.

The purpose of this letter to the community is to make a direct and open appeal to our young people.

Personally, I am still relatively new to Portland, but it's already clear to me that the vibe is very different than the energy I've experienced coming from the Bay Area, and traveling often to Africa, etc.

My point is many people here are telling me it's impossible to get African/Black people to respond to any call to action and that people here aren't going to

do anything to stand up for our community. I think those people are wrong. Do you?

We intend to expand the capacity of the Black Working Group to engage in more action around housing justice. We also want to be able to contribute to efforts to initiate and maintain Black and Brown community patrols to empower our communities to work together to solve our problems so that we can stop being fodder for the prison industrial complex.

The Black Working Group is organizing a youth caucus. We are looking for African/Black youth who want to make a difference.

We don't care what country or

neighborhood you come from. We don't care what school you went to or whether you even went to school. We want young women and men. We don't care if you have been incarcerated because like Malcolm X taught us "if your Black, you were born in jail!"

If you are willing to study and learn our history and our situation right now than we want you. If you are willing to become a well-trained organizer, than we want you. If you understand that everything we have today is because of a sacrifice our people made yesterday and therefore it's time now for you to make your contribution, then we want you.

Are you ready? Are you willing

to get the real education you have been deprived? Are you willing to work and become stronger as a result of it? Do you want to work with our youth and make a strong contribution to stopping the problems instead of just talking about them?

If you've read this far and you agree with these points. We want you! I'd love to speak with you! I've included my direct contact information. It's your time to step up to the plate and build for the future. Forward ever, backwards never!

Ahjamu Umi is a volunteer with The Black Working Group. He can be reached at 360-980-1409 or umifam@gmail.com

## Republican 'Small Government' Fraud

Actual policies don't match up

BY LAWRENCE S. WITNER

One of the most widely advertised, but falsest claims in American politics is that the modern Republican Party stands for "small government."

In the distant past, leading Republicans were indeed sharp critics of statism. And even today a few marginal party activists, like U.S. Rep. Ron Paul, have championed limited government -- even libertarian -- policies. But this is not at all the norm for the contemporary GOP.

For example, the Republican Party has stood up with remarkable consistency for the post-9/11 U.S. government policies of widespread surveillance, indefinite detention without trial, torture, and extraordinary rendition.

It has also supported government subsidies for religious institutions, government restrictions on immigration and free passage across international boundaries,

government denial of collective bargaining rights for public sector workers, government attacks on public use of public space (for example, the violent police assaults on the Occupy movement), and government interference with women's right to abortion and doctors' right to perform it.

And this barely scratches the surface of the Republican Party's "big government" policies.

The GOP has rallied fervently around government interference with the right of same-sex couples to marry, government provision of extraordinarily lengthy imprisonment for drug possession (for example, in the "war on drugs") and numerous other nonviolent offenses, such as government interference with voting rights (for example, "voter suppression" laws), and government restrictions on freedom of information.

Where, one wonders, is the Republican outrage at the U.S. government's crackdown on people like Bradley Manning who expose government misconduct,

or on whistle-blowing operations like WikiLeaks and its leading light, Julian Assange?

If the Republican Party were a zealous defender of civil liberties, as it claims to be, it would laud civil liberties organizations. But, in fact, the GOP has kept its distance from them. During the 1988 presidential campaign, George H. W. Bush, the Republican presidential candidate, publicly and repeatedly ridiculed his Democratic opponent as a "card-carrying member of the ACLU."

Of course, the biggest arena of U.S. government action is the military. Here is where 57 percent of U.S. tax dollars currently go, thereby creating the largest national military machine in world history.

A Republican Party that wanted to limit government would be eager to cut funding for this bloated giant. But the reality is that the modern GOP has consistently supported a vast U.S. military buildup. Today, its presidential candidate, Mitt Romney, assails his Democratic competitor for military weakness and champions a

\$2 trillion increase in U.S. military spending over the next decade.

Moreover, the Republican Party is an avid proponent of the most violent, abusive, and intrusive kind of government action -- war.

In recent decades, as U.S. military intervention or outright war raged in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Grenada, Panama, Kuwait, the Balkans, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and other nations, the GOP was a leading source of flag-waving jingoism, as it is today in the U.S. government's confrontation with Iran.

This is not a prescription for creating limited government. As the journalist Randolph Bourne remarked in the midst of U.S. government mobilization for World War I: "War is the health of the State."

Yes, admittedly, there is plenty of GOP support for small government when it comes to cutting taxes on the wealthy, limiting regulation of big business, gutting environmental regulations, weakening legal protections for workers and racial minorities, and slash-

ing government funding for public education, public health, and social welfare services.

But there is a common denominator to this kind of small government action. It is all designed to serve the interests of the wealthy and powerful at the expense of everyone else. Thus, the Republican Party opposes government alleviation of hunger through the distribution of food stamps, but supports government subsidies to corporations.

Just take a look at the platform that emerged from last week's GOP national convention. There was plenty of rhetoric about freedom and limited government. But the party's actual policies reflect a very different agenda.

For those people who can see beyond the deluge of slick campaign advertisements, it should be clear enough that the Republican Party's claim to support "small government" is a fraud. That claim is only an attractive mask, designed to disguise a party of privilege.

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